

Pirate Vocabulary List Cheat Sheet



Name: _____ Date: _____

Study the words and phrases below to become familiar with the vocabulary used by pirates and sailors. When you are done, you will be completing two crossword puzzles. One is for the words and the other is for the phrases.

Words

Squall - storm

Messmate - sailor on your ship, someone you share meals with

Mess - the place where meals are eaten

Shipmate - sailor on your ship, a friend

Lad - a boy, aka laddy

Me - my

Aye - yes (aye aye = yes sir)

Arrr - yes, I agree, hmmm

Square - fair, honest

Lubber - land lover, not a sailor, a wimpy person

Seafaring - working or traveling on the sea

Swing - hang by the neck

Seaman - a sailor

Gallows - framework with a rope noose to hang criminals

Barbecue - ship's cook

Bloody - damned or very good

Dog - bad man

Chart - map

Magistrate - local officer or judge

Sealegs - ability to walk steadily on the deck of a moving ship

Bearings - location, to find where you are

Gig - small rowboat used to go back and forth from ship to dock or shore

Gunner - sailor who fires the cannons

Parley - discussion between enemies

Irons - handcuffs and shackles

Blighter - a bad, gross person

Buccaneer - pirate

Articles - legal binding agreement, list of rules

Maroon - abandon on a deserted island, a person who was abandoned

Mutiny - when members of a crew or army overthrow their officers

Swab - a sailor, usually one of low rank

Matey - aka mate, another sailor on your ship who is your friend

Blockhouse - wooden fort with holes to shoot from

Hands - sailors

Blaggards - aka blackguards, a scoundrel or jerk

Roundshot - bullets or musketballs, shot

Musket - gun or rifle which requires loading after every shot, uses gunpowder and shot

Affidavit - sworn oath to be truth, aka Affy Davey

Bungling - messing up, making mistakes

Sauce - back talk



Keelhauling - to drag a person across or along the keel of a ship, often fatal

Heave - pull

Overboard - to all over the rail of a ship into the water

Quartermaster - officer in charge of assigning rooms and supplies

Saber - cavalry sword with a curved blade

Cutlass - short sword with a slightly curved blade

Doubloon - Spanish gold coin

Guinea - English gold coin

Sequin - Italian gold coin

Phrases

Shiver My Timbers - Scary, makes my bones shake

Batten Down the Hatches - tie down the hatches, shut your mouth

Honest Air - sweet, pure air or not swampy

Cry Havoc - from Shakespeare, meaning to start a war

Davy Jones Locker - bottom of the sea, death, Jones is evil spirit that preys upon sailors

Dog Watch - late afternoon or early evening work shift

Bite the Bullet - be brave

Smart as Paint - smart, fresh, new, honest

Tall Ship - any ship with tall masts

Spanish Main - Caribbean Sea, area controlled by Spain

Black Spot - summons to a meeting, usually deadly

Bar Silver - silver bars, usually weighing several pounds each

Pieces of Eight - Spanish silver coin

Make Terms - agree to rules

By Thunder - also By the Powers, swearing by something, usually God

French Leave - sneak off and abandon your shipmates, cowardly

Have the Wind of - to be in a better position than another person

Swivel Gun - small cannon whose aim can be changed easily

Jolly Roger - pirate flag, usually has a skull and crossed bones

Execution Dock - where the gallows are located in a sea port

Trim Sail - adjust the sails

Make Sail - unroll and put sails down

Weigh anchor - lift the anchor from the water so a ship can move

Reef - to tie part of a sail to the yardarms

Hand - to tie sails to the yardarms

Steer - to guide a ship by using its rudder and ship's wheel

Leeward - aka lee shore, the wind blows toward this side, bad position

Extra Phrases:

Life or death on a lee shore

Dead men tell no tales

*Created by
Jan Speth*

